

Warren Howard
9340 Halsell Road
Gulfport, MS 39503
(228) 863-4921
Fax: (228) 863-3945
Email: warrenhoward1@yahoo.com

290925
September 26, 2003

Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

- NHTSA-04-18813-1
- Ref. 1: A Petition for Rulemaking to Amend FMVSS 208 - Occupant Crash Protection, to allow the Audio System Seat Belt Safety Device, indicated on attachment 1 to be a standard feature.
- Ref. 2: NHTSA approval letter stating that such a device described in Ref. 1 may be installed in addition to, but not in place of, the warning system required by S7.3. Attachment 2.
- Ref. 3: Numerous letters of support from government officials that indicate that this petition is well supported by the public and needed to promote seatbelt use. Attachment 3.

Mr. Warren Howard respectfully petitions NHTSA to amend FMVSS 208, S7.3 to allow for the installation and standard feature of the Audio System Seat Belt Safety Device listed in Ref. 1. This will not change, but will be an addition to FMVSS 208 listed below.

FMVSS 208, S7.3 A seat belt assembly provided at the driver's seating position shall be equipped with a warning system that activates a continuous or intermittent audible signal, not less than 4 seconds and not more than 8 seconds, and indicates either "Fasten Seat Belts" or a "Telltale shown in table 2 of FMVSS 101.

The audio system seat belt safety device per Ref. 1 would prevent the radio or sound system of the vehicle from emitting any sound or power on unless the occupants of all designated seating positions have their seat belts fastened. Further more, to clarify the device's operability, this audio system seat belt safety device should be installed in the seat and connected to the audio system of the vehicle. This system will sense when a person is seating and the audio system will not have power until the seatbelt for that seated person is engaged. Once the seat belt is engaged, power will then be applied to the audio system. In addition, this can be installed on all seats within the same vehicle. This device will not interfere with the audible and visual warning system mentioned in FMVSS 208, S7.3(a) but will enhance it. This is such a simple and inexpensive device that carries such an encouragement to wear seat belts.

"Buckle Up For The Future"

Matt 19:26
"With God...."

Mark 9:23
"If thou believe....."

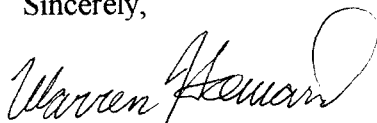
Proverbs 29:18
"Vision....."

Previous correspondence per Ref. 2 indicates that your position on the installation of such a device, which would disable a vehicle's radio or sound system if occupants are not belted , may be installed in addition to, but not in place of, the warning system required by S7.3. We are in agreement that making this device a FMVSS 208 standard feature would be a great encouragement for people to wear seat belts and save thousands of lives each year. Also we realize and agree that this is not changing FMVSS 208, but only an addition that will make such a difference in vehicle safety.

Over the past few years, I corresponded with numerous government officials listed in Ref. 3 on behalf of the audio system seat belt safety device. The outcome and response was overwhelming as indicated in attachment 3. This response indicates that the public and government of the United States are well aware of the lack of seat belt use and support the addition of such a device to amend FMVSS 208. It all goes back to one issue, the approval of this petition to make it a standard feature will encourage seat belt use, which will saves lives and also save billions of dollars in insurance costs. After all, the purpose of FMVSS 208 states "this standard is to reduce the number of deaths of vehicle occupants, and the severity of injuries".

The sooner we can make this a standard feature, the sooner we can start the encouragement of seat belt use and saves lives. I appreciate your consideration and time on this matter and will be eagerly awaiting your approval. If there are any questions, concerns, or you would like to meet on this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Warren Howard
Audio System Seat Belt Safety Device Inventor

"Buckle Up For The Future"

Matt 19:26
"With God...."

Mark 9:23
"If thou believe....."

Proverbs 29:18
"Vision....."

Attachment 1



US005394955A

United States Patent [19]

Howard

[11] Patent Number: 5,394,955

[45] Date of Patent: Mar. 7, 1995

[54] APPARATUS FOR ENCOURAGING SEAT BELT USE

[76] Inventor: Warren Howard, 9340 Halsell St., Gulfport, Miss. 39501

[21] Appl. No.: 821,836

[22] Filed: Jan. 13, 1992

Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 589,453, Sep. 27, 1990, abandoned.

[51] Int. Cl.⁶ B60K 28/04

[52] U.S. Cl. 180/273; 280/801.1

[58] Field of Search 280/801, 802, 801.1;
180/269, 270, 273; 340/457.1

[56] References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

3,808,592 4/1974 Wright 180/270
4,136,328 1/1979 Cambern 180/270
4,189,170 1/1980 Tanaka 280/802

4,673,195 6/1987 Boyd et al. 340/457.1

Primary Examiner—Kenneth R. Rice

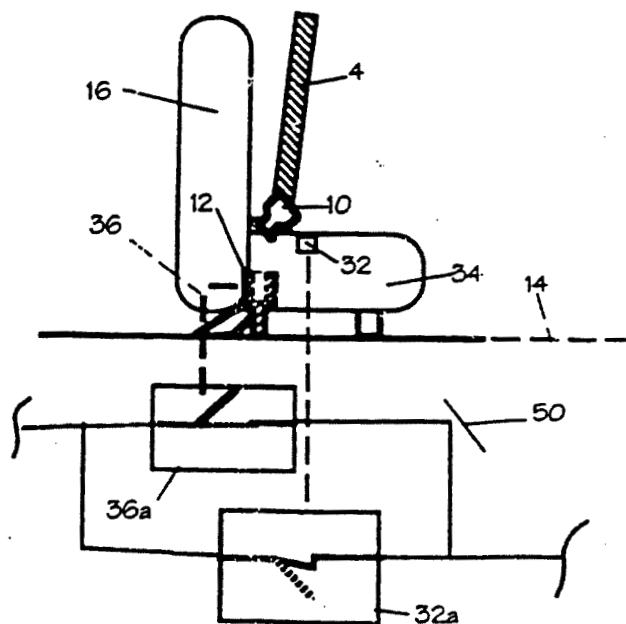
Assistant Examiner—Paul N. Dickson

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Alexander Norcross

[57] ABSTRACT

An apparatus for seat belt use encourages use without inducing extensive user resistance. A seat mounted switch detects occupancy of a seat and activates an inducement circuit; a seat belt latch mounted switch detects the fastening of a seat belt and completes the inducement circuit. The inducement circuit controls power to occupant comfort and convenience features of the automobile, notably radio, audio and heating/cooling systems. The automobile will continue to function if seat belts are not used, but at a generally undesirable loss of comfort and convenience features. Seat belt use occurs as it is less uncomfortable to use the seat belts than to omit use.

5 Claims, 1 Drawing Sheet



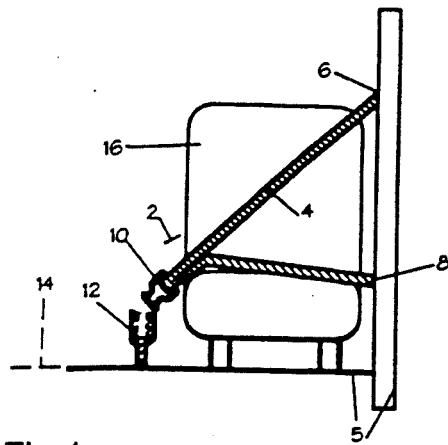


Fig 1

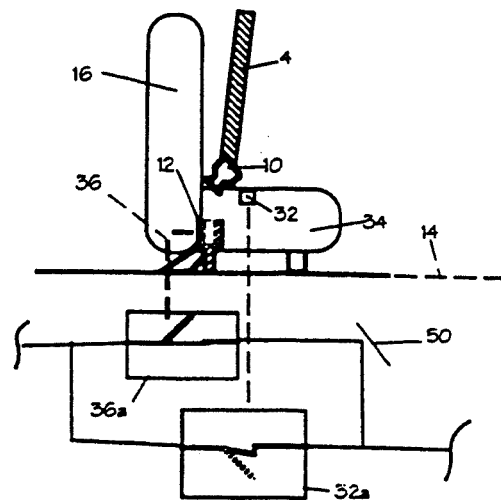


Fig 3

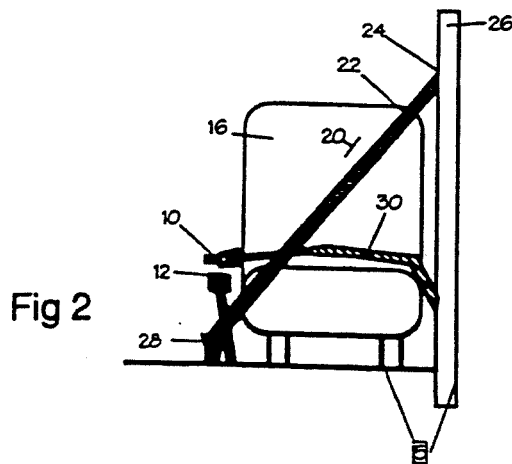


Fig 2

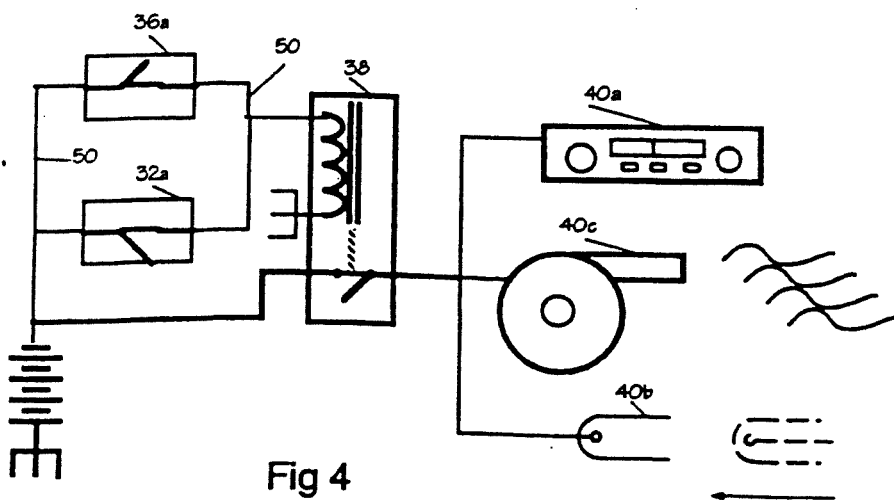


Fig 4

APPARATUS FOR ENCOURAGING SEAT BELT USE

This is a continuation-in-part of application serial number 07/589,453, filed on Sept. 27, 1990, now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Seat belts are a recognised primary occupant protection feature for automobiles. They have such a significant beneficial impact in reducing the incidence of injuries and death in collisions that their installation has long been mandated as an essential item of safety equipment.

It is equally known that the incidence of use of seat belts falls well below the desirable level of complete use by all vehicle occupants. Initially, coercive schemes for forcing seat belt use were imposed. The most famous such was a short lived federal regulation that mandated interlocking the vehicle engine with a seat belt sensor so that the vehicle could not be started unless all seat belts were fastened. An intense consumer reaction to this regulation led to its cancellation. Coercive schemes still remain, notably in the existence of State Seat Belt usage laws.

Currently, effort in the area of vehicle occupancy restraints centers on passive devices which do not require occupant cooperation for their function. Air bags are the currently ultimate passive restraint. However, Air bags are principally useful for protection against forward collision forces; they provide little protection against side impacts. Further, a significant proportion of crash injuries and deaths occur as a result of second impacts: the vehicle, as a result of the first impact, is projected into a second, usually more severe second impact. Air bags provide protection for only a short time period, often deflating before the second impact, which leaves the occupant unprotected.

Passive seat belt systems, alone or in conjunction with Air bags, are the current mandated occupant restraint solution. These generally take the form of door mounted belts which enclose an occupant as the door is closed. Unfortunately, current designs only automatically fasten the shoulder harness, and a lap belt must be manually fastened. Users often do not fasten the lap belt, and as a result may be severely injured by the shoulder harness alone. Also, automatic belts can still be disconnected completely, and often are.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention pertains to the field of vehicle occupant restraints, particularly to seat belts.

Seat Belt usage by vehicle occupants is a complex function of occupant habits and desires. Most persons explain their non-use of seat belts as being due to inconvenience or discomfort. It is typically observed that persons who use seat belts use them on all occasions, and those who do not always use seat belts tend to use them less and less frequently. These latter non-users react adversely to coercion; they will not, for instance, accept vehicles in which seat belt use is required to operate the vehicle.

The invention here disclosed is a combination improvement to a seat belt installation, usable with manually fastened seat belts or with automatic belts to discourage disconnection, which enhances seat belt use by, essentially, establishing an perception of slightly greater

discomfort from non-use than from use. The improvement lies in the interconnection of seat use sensor and seat belt use sensor to control the vehicles secondary, passenger convenience functions, notably the radio or stereo or the heating or air conditioning systems.

In simplest form, the seat belt use sensor interlocks the power to the vehicle's radio and to the heater/air conditioner control. The vehicle remains functional, and the user can start and drive as before; only the level of occupant comfort has been decreased.

It is thus an object of the invention to discourage non-use of seat belts without inducing overt user rejection of the seat belt system.

It is a further object of the invention to increase the use of seat belts.

It is a further object of the invention to inculcate a habit of seat belt usage in vehicle occupants.

It is a further object of the invention to induce increased vehicular seat belt usage without inhibiting essential operational capability of the vehicle.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a view of a one piece manual seat belt.

FIG. 2 is a view of an automatic seat belt, showing the separate, manually latched lap belt.

FIG. 3 is a schematic of the occupancy and seat belt latch sensors.

FIG. 4 is a schematic of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

As is known, passive occupant restraints in American vehicles follow two basic designs. The first is a fully manual seat belt-shoulder harness 2 combination in which a continuous belt 4 is fastened to a vehicle structure 5 at two points 6, 8 along one side of a seat 16, one point 6 above average seated shoulder height and one point 8 at floor level 14. Some means is provided to adjust the length of the belt, usually in the form of an inertial locking take up reel (not shown). A seat belt buckle 10 slides along the belt and engages in a mating, latching clasp 12, mounted at floor level 14 on the opposite side of the seat 16.

The second is a door mounted automatic belt 20, in which a shoulder belt 22 is fastened at an upper end 24 to a device moving in a track in the door 26, and at a lower end 28 to the floor structure 14a at a location diagonally across the seat 16 from the door 26. The door track mechanism (not shown) is constructed so that as the door 26 closes, the belt 22 is drawn tight across the body of the user. A separate manual lap belt 30 must still be fastened by the user to provide complete protection.

A previous, ultimately publicly rejected seat belt usage system developed adequate sensors 32, 36, known to the art, for detecting the presence of an occupant in the seat and for detecting the latching of a seat belt buckle into its clasp. The occupant detection sensor 32 usually comprises a pressure sensitive electrical switch 32a mounted in the base 34 of the seat 16, and activated by the displacement of the seat under the weight of a user. The buckle latching sensor 36 also usually comprises an electrical switch 36a, mounted in the clasp 12 and activated by complete locking insertion of the buckle 10. Various forms of such switches exist, known to the seat belt art, which primarily differ in their mechanical detection of full buckle engagement.

The above sensor mechanisms are understood in the art and the specific variant chosen will be apparent to those workers skilled in the art. It should be apparent, however, that since one aspect of my invention is that it does not create the safety risks of the prior art engine operation interlocks, that the extreme reliability required of the prior art sensors is not required of those sensors in use in my invention, and this may change the engineering selection of specific sensors to be used.

In my invention, I use the sensors 32,36 above described as electrical switches 32a, 36a to detect the presence of one of more vehicle occupants, and for each occupant, the correct latching of the corresponding seat belt 2,20. Seat occupancy sensor switch 32a is normally closed, and is opened by the weight of a seat occupant. Belt latching sensor switch 36a is normally open, and is closed by the latching of the belt. Many variations are possible for this interconnection, all of which are known or will be readily apparent to those familiar with automotive sensors, and the depicted installation is chosen solely to illustrate the functioning of the invention.

Both electrical switches 32a, 36a are preferably connected in parallel, so that the overall sensor circuit 50 for each belt position is closed if the seat is not occupied or, if the seat occupied, only when the belt is fastened; otherwise the circuit is open.

In turn, the sensor electrical circuit 50 controls means 38 for applying power to one or more occupant comfort units 40a,b,c in the vehicle. The phrase Occupant Comfort Units may designate entertainment units 40a, notably an installed radio or stereo; accessory sockets 40b supplied for optional plug in accessories, such as cigarette lighters; or electrically controlled heating or air conditioning apparatus 40c. This list is not exhaustive, as designers now and in the future will expand the accessories provided in a car for the user's enjoyment. The phrase "Occupant Comfort Unit" as used herein, however, excludes any electrical system necessary for the safe operation of the vehicle, and thus lights, signals, the engine and any operating controls are excluded.

In the invention as described, the power to the chosen operator comfort units passes through control means 38, as for example a normally open relay, which is controlled by the sensor circuit 50. Only if the sensors 32,36 are closed by all occupied seats 16 having latched seat belts 2,20 will the relay 38 close, providing power to the occupant comfort units 40. If one or more seats 16 are occupied, but the seat belts 2,20 are not fastened, then the relay 38 will not close, and the occupant comfort units 40 will be rendered inoperative. It is apparent to those skilled in the art that use of a relay for control unit 38 is merely illustrative. Relays remain the most common such control units known to the inventor, but are rapidly being replaced by various solid state power control devices, which may equally serve for control means 38. It will also be apparent how the invention described may be integrated into an overall vehicle power control system under microprocessor control; the exact implementation of such a control would be so much affected by other unrelated vehicular systems that no prototype can be here described.

As a result of all power to the chosen operator comfort units passing through control means 38, the invention is rendered not susceptible to easy user defeat or disablement. The balanced psychological inducement imposed by making use of the vehicle less comfortable, but not impossible, is sustained by making it easier to

fasten the seat belt than to by pass the comfort unit disablement or to restore, by alternate action, operation of the comfort units. For this reason, it is considered best that any accessory power outlets in the vehicle, such as the lighter socket 40b, be controlled by the control means 38 to prevent ready by passing of the invention.

It is a critical part of my invention that this circuit arrangement does not affect operator safety or the ability of the user to start and safely drive the car. Rather, it induces a degree of discomfort or psychological annoyance from the lack of the occupant comfort items which balances, in the mind of the user, the discomfort or psychological resistance to wearing the seat belt. It appears the this inducement, especially by controlling the operation of an installed stereo, will have its most marked effect on young drivers, who are statistically most in need of proper seat belt habits due to their greater frequency of accidents.

Further, this balancing of psychological inducements is below the level of coercive controls, as the invention does not prevent operation of the vehicle. Thus the invention induces in a majority of users a habit of seat belt use on all occasions, without inspiring a strong counter reaction against the invention. It is felt that use of the invention will largely avoid the open and wide spread user attempts to defeat and disconnect the entire mechanism, which defeated the earlier unsuccessful engine interlock.

The invention does not create perfect total use by all users of seat belts, but then the semiautomatic door mounted belts of the current art are often found disconnected and unused. It will however, by providing a balanced psychological inducement less than coercion but greater than the countering discomfort of seat belt use, expand the use of manual seat belts so as to render conventional manual seat belt systems as or more effective than automatic belts.

Manual belt are cheaper, and, having fewer moving parts, more reliable than automatic belts. Since use of a manual belt prevents porpoising of the user in a frontal crash, manual belts where used are safer than automatic belts alone, which do not provide a restraining lap belt. The invention described thus can be seen to both improve safety and reduce costs.

I claim:

1. An apparatus for inducing seat belt usage by occupants of a vehicle comprising:
means, responsive to occupancy of a vehicle seat by an occupant, for generating a first signal;
means, responsive to latching of a seat belt by an occupant, for generating a second signal;
means comprising:
means responsive to said first and said second signal, for controlling electrical power to accessible vehicle accessory power outlets and to a vehicle heater.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 comprising:
means responsive to said first and said second signal, for controlling electrical power to accessible vehicle accessory power outlets and to a vehicle air conditioner.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
said means for generating a first signal being a normally closed electrical switch, switching to an open condition responsive to the deflection of a seat under the weight of an occupant;
said means for generating a second signal being a normally open electrical switch, switching to a

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closed condition responsive to the latching of a seat belt;

id means for generating a first signal being electrically parallel with said means for generating a second signal.

The apparatus of claim 2, further comprising:

id means for generating a first signal being a normally closed electrical switch, switching to an open condition responsive to the deflection of a seat under the weight of an occupant;

id means for generating a second signal being a normally open electrical switch, switching to a closed condition responsive to the latching of a seat belt;

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said means for generating a first signal being electrically parallel with said means for generating a second signal.

5. In a vehicle having seats and passive occupant restraints corresponding to the seats, having sensors generating signals responsive to occupancy of one or more seats, having sensors generating signals responsive to latching of a passive occupant restraint corresponding to an occupied seat, having controlling means responsive to the sensors for inhibiting operation of one or more vehicle systems, having one or more units of the group consisting of air heating and air conditioning the improvement comprising:

said controlling means inhibiting all power to accessible vehicle accessory power outlets and to at least one said unit.

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Attachment 2

NHTSA Approval



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

APR 11 2003

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Halsell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

This responds to your telephone calls asking about the requirements of Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 208, Occupant Crash Protection, as they relate to a device you have developed. According to your calls, the device would prevent the radio or sound system of a vehicle from emitting any sound unless the occupants of all designated seating positions have their seat belts fastened. You ask if the statutes and regulations administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) would prohibit the sale or use of such a device.

By way of background, NHTSA administers a statute requiring that motor vehicles manufactured for sale in the United States or imported into the United States be manufactured so as to reduce the likelihood of motor vehicle crashes and of deaths and injuries when crashes do occur. We refer to that statute as the Vehicle Safety Act. It is codified at 49 U.S.C. §30101, et seq.

One of the agency's functions under the Vehicle Safety Act is to issue and enforce Federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSSs). These standards specify safety performance requirements for motor vehicles and/or items of motor vehicle equipment. Manufacturers must certify compliance with all applicable safety standards and permanently apply a label to each vehicle or item of equipment stating that the vehicle complies with all applicable FMVSSs.

Requirements for audible and visual warnings for seat belts are established in S7 of FMVSS No. 208. S7.3 specifies that the driver's seating position be equipped with a seat belt warning system that activates, under specified circumstances, a continuous or intermittent audible signal for a period of "not less than 4 seconds and not more than 8 seconds."

In a letter dated June 7, 2001, to Mr. Bob Archer of Longacre Associates, we indicated that a vehicle manufacturer wishing to provide a voluntary audible signal that sounds after the 8 second period specified in S7.3 of FMVSS No. 208 may do so, but



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE
888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

must provide some means for differentiating the voluntarily provided signal from the required signal. We suggested that such differentiation could be provided in various ways; e.g., by time (the voluntarily provided signal begins well after the required signal ends) or sound (the voluntarily provided signal has a different sound than the required signal).


It is our position that a device such as you have described, which would disable a vehicle's radio or sound system if occupants are not belted, may be installed in addition to, but not in place of, the warning system required by S7.3. Such a device may be offered either as an original equipment option or an aftermarket item, but it must be configured such that it can be differentiated from the warning system required by S7.3.

You should assure that the installation of your device does not negatively impact any required safety system. After the first sale of a vehicle, manufacturers, distributors, dealers, and repair businesses are prohibited from "knowingly making inoperative" any device or element of design installed on or in that vehicle in compliance with an applicable standard. In general, the "make inoperative" prohibition (49 U.S.C. § 30122) requires businesses that modify motor vehicles to ensure that they do not remove, disconnect, or degrade the performance of safety equipment installed in compliance with an applicable standard. Violations of this prohibition are punishable by civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation.

In addition, the device you describe would be considered "motor vehicle equipment" under the vehicle safety act. Therefore, if the device contained a defect (either in manufacture, design, or performance) that relates to motor vehicle safety, the manufacturer would be required to conduct a recall campaign to notify owners and to remedy the defect free of charge.

I hope this information answers your questions. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Otto Matheke of my staff at (202) 366-2992.

Sincerely,


Jacqueline Glassman
Chief Counsel

cc: Greg Smith
Garvey, Smith, Nehrbass & Doody, LLC
Suite 3290
3838 North Causeway Blvd.
Metairie, LA 70002

Attachment 3

Support Letters

TRENT LOTT
MISSISSIPPI

FINANCE

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

RULES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

United States Senate

SUITE 487, RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2403

245 EAST CAPITOL STREET
SUITE 226
JACKSON, MS 39201

3100 S. PASCAGOULA STREET
PASCAGOULA, MS 39567

#1 GOVERNMENT PLAZA
SUITE 428
GULFPORT, MS 39501

911 JACKSON AVENUE
SUITE 127
OXFORD, MS 38655

200 E. WASHINGTON STREET
SUITE 145
GREENWOOD, MS 38930

September 29, 2003

Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Dr. Runge:

Mr. Warren Howard, of Gulfport, Mississippi, has patented an invention to encourage the use of seat belts. Mr. Howard is attempting to have this device made a mandatory piece of equipment for vehicles in the future.

I am requesting all due full and fair consideration be given to Mr. Howard's application.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Trent Lott

TL:bth

THAD COCHRAN
MISSISSIPPI

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2402

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,
AND FORESTRY
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON
APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND
ADMINISTRATION

September 10, 2003

Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Dr. Runge:

It has come to my attention that Mr. Warren Howard, of Gulfport, Mississippi, is seeking approval from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration so that his patented invention may become a standard seatbelt feature.

I hope that you will give his application full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,


THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator

TC/mw
Enclosure

GENE TAYLOR
SOUTHERN MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2405

August 12, 2003

2511 HAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2405
(202) 225-5772

DISTRICT OFFICES:
2424 14th STREET
GULFPORT, MS 39501
(228) 864-7670

701 MAIN STREET
SUITE 210
HATTIESBURG, MS 39401
(601) 882-3245

1014 GOVERNMENT STREET
OCEAN SPRINGS, MS 39564
(228) 872-7900

The Honorable Norman Mineta
Secretary of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W. Suite 10200
Washington D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

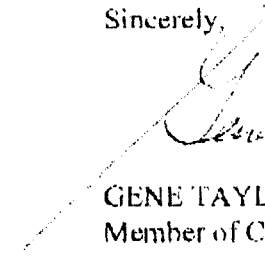
I am writing you in order to bring to your attention a patented invention that could potentially save thousands of lives.

Attached you will find a copy Mr. Warren Howard's patent for a seat belt device that encourages individuals to utilize their seat belts. It is a rather clever invention that only allows the use of an automobile's stereo system and heating/cooling system if the seat belts are in use. The invention senses when a seat is in use and activates the above mentioned systems when an inducement circuit is completed when the belts are buckled.

Mr. Howard has been in contact with The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regarding his invention. Mr. Howard would like to make the device a mandatory piece of equipment on all future motor vehicles. I would greatly appreciate if you could give full and fair consideration to Mr. Howard's device as appropriate under the agency's rules and regulations.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,


GENE TAYLOR
Member of Congress

GT:ej



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR

July 9, 2003

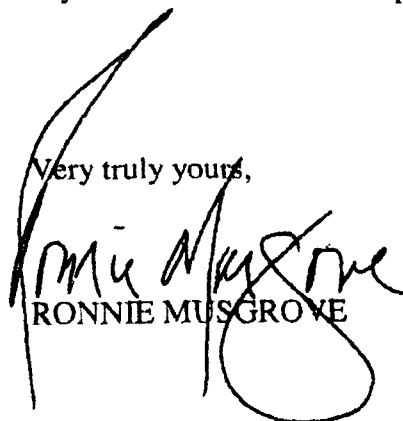
Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Halsell Road
Gulfport, Mississippi 39503

Dear Mr. Howard:

As Governor of the State of Mississippi I appreciate your invention of a seatbelt device that would help protect citizens. I am constantly searching for ways to improve the quality of life and safety of all the citizens of our state. I believe that this invention has the potential to promote seat belt awareness and safety.

Again, thank you for your effort. If I may be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM/ilh



GEORGE DALE
Commissioner of Insurance
State Fire Marshal

LEE HARRELL
Deputy Commissioner

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Mississippi Insurance Department

501 N. West Street
1001 Woolfolk Building (39201)
Post Office Box 79
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0079
(601) 359-3569
<http://www.doi.state.ms.us>

June 24, 2003

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Halsell Road
Gulfport, MS 39503

Dear Mr. Howard:

As Commissioner of Insurance, I am very aware of the importance of effective seat belt safety. It is important that we save the lives of our people who are involved in accidents. Any effort for inventions of this kind that would accomplish that goal would surely be supported by this writer and the Mississippi Department of Insurance.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "George Dale".

George Dale
Commissioner of Insurance

GD/sn



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR

October 3, 2000

Warren Howard
9340 Halsell Road
Gulfport, Mississippi 39503

Dear Mr. Howard:

Thank you for meeting with Governor Musgrove at his very first One-on-One event to voice your support for seatbelt safety and also to share your ideas along with your patented invention.

I have forwarded copies of your information to Mr. Wilson Golding of the United States Department of Transportation for further action. You should hear something within the next two weeks. Please feel free to contact me with your concerns and I will be more than happy to assist you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Boyd", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Michael Boyd
Policy & Planning Director
Office of the Governor

MB:fdg

TRENT LOTT
MISSISSIPPI

MAJORITY LEADER

FINANCE

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

RULES

United States Senate

SUITE 487, RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2403

May 23, 2001

245 EAST CAPITOL STREET
SUITE 226
JACKSON, MS 39201

3100 S. PASCAGOULA STREET
PASCAGOULA, MS 39567

#1 GOVERNMENT PLAZA
SUITE 428
GULFPORT, MS 39501

911 JACKSON AVENUE
SUITE 127
OXFORD, MS 38655

200 E. WASHINGTON STREET
SUITE 145
GREENWOOD, MS 38930

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Thank you for your letter regarding your seat belt idea. It was good to hear from you and I appreciate your taking the time to write.

Your ideas are very interesting and I agree that we must increase the safety of those in automobiles. We lose many lives on our highways because of the lack of seatbelt use. Your ideas and views can lead to ensuring the safety of those while traveling.

Again, thank you for writing. If you find that I can be of assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to contact my office. With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



Trent Lott

TL:mbc

FAX

AROUND THE WORLD

Studies show blacks less likely to buckle up

DALLAS — With studies showing low rates of seat belt use among black youths, U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher called on mayors Thursday to help get black children in their cities to buckle up.

A recent study found that blacks in their teens and 20s are half as likely to use automobile safety belts as whites and Hispanics in the same age group.

Satcher told the city leaders and high school students that traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for blacks age 15 and under, and the second leading cause for those age 15 to 24.

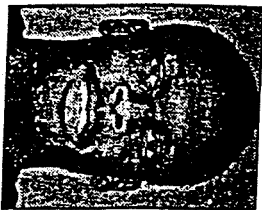
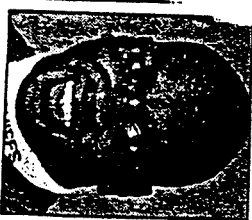
falls just control.

Hurley thinks it saved him life.

A constant in athletes' accidents: No seat belts

Mailk Sealy was not wearing his seat belt when he died. It's not a new story.

Thomas: Memory spurred campaign.



Sealy: Also was not wearing seat belt.

Neither was Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Derrick Thomas when he crashed his car Jan. 23. Thomas was paralyzed and later died. One passenger who failed to wear a belt also died, but a second passenger who did buckle up suffered only minor injuries.

"The seat belt is the most important piece of safety equipment in a car," says Tim Hurd of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which estimates that two-thirds of drivers buckle their seat belts.

No one knows if elite athletes are less likely to use seat belts than the rest of us. But

Bill Beausay, a professor at Urbana University and former president of the Academy of Sports Psychology, says his research suggests why some athletes might not wear them.

"High-level athletes score high on risk-taking," Beausay says. "Failing to put on your seat belt obviously — or maybe not so obviously — is a form of risk. Not wearing your seat belt is more like random risk, a devil-may-care feeling that nothing bad will happen."

The Professional Football Players Mothers Association wants to reverse that trend. It has a "Buckle Up for 58" campaign in honor of Thomas, who wore that number. Bobby Hurley was not wearing a seat belt the night

he nearly died in a collision in 1993. It had nothing to do with risk-taking or feelings of invincibility, he says: "I think putting a seat belt on is something you're conditioned to do. I grew up not wearing one, so I wasn't conditioned to do it."

He is now. Save for one recent lapse, Hurley says he always wears a belt these days. "I make sure I do," he says.

"I have to get the kids in their car seats and I'm on the same page now. One time I was rushing and I didn't get mine on. Cameron, my 4-year-old, told me to put it on. She's sharp. She's smarter than me." She is smarter than one-third of the drivers in the USA.

By Erik Brady

Seat belt facts

► For every 100 crashes that would kill you, a seat belt would save you 45 times, studies by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show.

► Sixty-eight percent of drivers in the USA use seat belts, NHTSA surveys show. That's up from about half the drivers in 1990, 21% in 1985 and 14% in 1983.

► Americans pay \$14.3 billion a year in injury-related costs for people who don't wear belts, NHTSA says.

► The government's goal is 90% belt use by 2005. That would prevent more than 5,500 deaths, the Department of Transportation reports.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DON SIEGELMAN
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALABAMA

STATE CAPITOL
600 DEXTER AVENUE, ROOM N-104
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130

(334) 242-7100
FAX: (334) 242-0937

April 20, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

Dear Warren:

Thank you for providing me with information about your seat belt invention. I am grateful to receive this material and appreciate your taking the time to share it with me.

I am forwarding a copy of your correspondence to my policy director, Sabra Barnett, for her information and review.

I look forward to staying in touch with you and hope you will contact my office if I may be of any assistance.

Thanks, again, and best regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Don Siegelman, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' and 'S'.

Don Siegelman
Governor

DS/me/ar

cc: Ms. Sabra Barnett



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



THOMAS J. VILSACK
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

SALLY J. PEDERSON
LT. GOVERNOR

April 26, 2001

Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

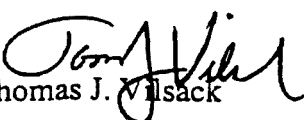
Dear Warren:

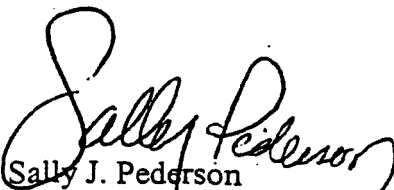
Thank you for taking the time to write us about your invention to save lives. It is very important to us to hear from Iowans. Your opinions matter to us.

We want to make sure all Iowans are informed on issues they are concerned about—so we appreciate the opportunity to ensure that you get some additional information. We have worked closely with the Department of Transportation on this issue, and have forwarded your letter to that department.

Someone from the Department of Transportation will contact you regarding this issue within a few weeks. In the meantime, we have kept a copy of your correspondence in our files. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our office again.

Best Regards,


Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor


Sally J. Pederson
Lieutenant Governor





Iowa Department of Transportation

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010

515-239-1111

FAX: 515-239-1639

May 4, 2001

Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Staff in the office of Iowa Governor Thomas J. Vilsack sent me a copy of your April 7 letter regarding your patented device to encourage safety belt use.

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) has supported safety belt use for many years and worked to make belt use mandatory in Iowa law. Your device sounds very interesting, and I will share your information with staff in the DOT's Motor Vehicle Division.

Thanks for bringing your suggestion to the attention of the Governor's office and the DOT.

Sincerely,

Mark F. Wandro
Director

MFW:et

cc: Governor's Office
Motor Vehicle Division



State of Louisiana

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Baton Rouge

70804-9004

M. J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 94004
(225) 342-7015

May 8, 2001

Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

I have received your letter regarding your seat belt invention and thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention.

I am forwarding your letter to James Champagne, executive director of the Highway Safety Commission, for his review. Someone from that office should be in touch with you soon. If you would like to contact that office directly, the address is:

James Champagne, Executive Director
Highway Safety Commission
P.O. Box 66336
Baton Rouge, LA 70896

Again, thank you for taking time to write me.

Sincerely,

M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.

cs/dmg

c: James Champagne



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

JOHN ENGLER
GOVERNOR

April 16, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Rd.
Gulfport MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard :

Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with me. Your information and opinions help keep me informed on matters that are most important to the people of Michigan.

I have taken the liberty of forwarding your concerns to Col. Michael D. Robinson, Director of the Michigan State Police, for his review. Col. Robinson's office will contact you if he has any questions or needs further information.

Thank you again for contacting my office.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John Engler".

John Engler
Governor



State of Florida
**DEPARTMENT OF
HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES**

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0500

FRED O. DICKINSON
Executive Director

April 25, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Governor Bush received your recent letter and asked us to respond on his behalf concerning your motor vehicle seat belt invention.

We do believe that your patented system, if installed as original equipment in motor vehicles, would result in higher safety belt use rates. However, the state of Florida cannot require motorists to have equipment installed in their vehicles which is not required by federal standards. As evidenced by the ongoing changes to standardize child safety seat design and motor vehicle attachment points, federal standards can be changed when new and improved designs and materials can be shown to improve safety.

Therefore, we recommend you pursue your efforts to have your safety belt invention required as standard equipment in motor vehicles through the federal government, at both the legislative and executive branches. Obviously, contact with motor vehicle manufacturers could be of value. Lastly, you might want to consider the possibility of making your invention available to the public as an "after-market" offering.

Again, thank you for your interest in highway safety and for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

Fred O. Dickinson
Executive Director

FOD/eb



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JEANNE SHAHEEN
GOVERNOR

April 14, 2001

Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Thank you for contacting my office with your letter and ideas for encouraging seat belt use.

New Hampshire law would need to be amended to realize the changes that you would like to make. If you would like to pursue a change in the existing law, I encourage you to contact a New Hampshire representative. As you are aware, the legislature is the branch of government that is responsible for drafting and introducing legislation, which eventually becomes law for the state.

Once again, thank you for bringing your ideas to my attention. If my office can be of assistance to you in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Shaheen".

Jeanne Shaheen

JS:ds

HEADQUARTERS
INDIANA STATE POLICE
INDIANAPOLIS



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
MELVIN J. CARRAWAY

April 24, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, Mississippi 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Your recent letter to Governor Frank O'Bannon introducing an apparatus to encourage the use of seatbelts has been referred to me for response.

We agree that the use of seatbelts can save lives, and in Indiana, it's the law. It is our objective to save lives by ensuring that seatbelts are worn. However, we are always seeking ways to increase our effectiveness. With the help of inventions like yours, the injury and death rates in crashes could be reduced.

Thank you for sharing your idea with us. Best wishes in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "MJC", written over a horizontal line.

Melvin J. Carraway
Superintendent

MJC:bb
63101

cc: Governor's Office



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D., Governor

Department of Transportation

Transportation Safety

235 Union Street NE

Salem, OR 97301-1054

Telephone (503) 986-4190

FAX (503) 986-4341

FILE CODE:

May 9, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard,

Governor Kitzhaber asked me to respond to your recent correspondence with his office. I am the state's safety program coordinator. I deal with vehicle safety equipment and laws pertaining to this equipment. Oregon has adopted the federal motor vehicle safety standards for safety equipment and other equipment covered by federal equipment standards.


Oregon could not be the approval authority for safety equipment for automobiles because we have adopted the federal standards. Oregon could not require that vehicle manufacturers have a device such as yours in their vehicles prior to sale, unless this device was required by federal motor vehicle safety standards for new vehicles.

Like the letters you enclosed with your correspondence, we share your concern for saving lives. Oregon has progressive state laws concerning occupant safety. We have a primary safety belt law for all ages in all seating positions including children being required to be in child safety systems until 4 years of age or 40 pounds of weight. There are two bills in the current legislative session that would further protect occupants. One would outlaw passengers in the bed of pickups and the other would require booster seats for children up to six years old or 60 pounds of weight.

I suggest you contact the national Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, as Michael Boyd of the state of Mississippi suggested. The DOT is where this type of device would need to get approval to be required by vehicle manufactures.

Thank you for sharing this information with us. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stan Porter".

Stan Porter, Coordinator
Safety Standards Program

Cc: Aravinda Crocker, Governor's Citizens Representative



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PAUL E. PATTON
GOVERNOR

700 CAPITOL AVENUE
SUITE 100
FRANKFORT, KY 40601
(502) 564-2611
FAX: (502) 564-2517

May 10, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

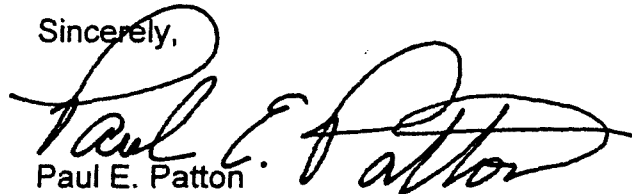
Dear Mr. Howard:

Thank you for your letter regarding your safety belt initiative.

I have forwarded your correspondence to Secretary James C. Codell, III of the Transportation Cabinet and asked that he, or a member of his staff, respond to you directly regarding this matter.

Again, thank you for writing. If I can be of future assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Paul E. Patton

c: Secretary James C. Codell, III



AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER M/F/D



Commonwealth of Kentucky
Transportation Cabinet
Frankfort, Kentucky 40622

James C. Codell, III
Secretary of Transportation

Paul E. Patton
Governor

Clifford C. Linkes, P.E.
Deputy Secretary

May 16, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Governor Paul E. Patton has directed the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to investigate your concern regarding your seat belt invention. We have sent this information to the appropriate office for review, and we will respond promptly.

We welcome every opportunity to serve you. If we can provide additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

James C. Codell, III
Secretary

JCC/jb



KENTUCKY TRANSPORTATION CABINET
"PROVIDE A SAFE, EFFICIENT, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND, AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM
WHICH PROMOTES ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN KENTUCKY."
"AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER M/F/D"



Maryland Department of Transportation

The Secretary's Office

Parris N. Glendening
Governor

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
Lt. Governor

John D. Porcari
Secretary

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Deputy Secretary

May 14, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Thank you for your recent letter to Governor Parris N. Glendening regarding your occupant-protection patent. The Governor received your letter and asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

The issue of occupant protection continues to be one of Maryland's highest vehicular transportation priorities, and we agree that all occupants should be properly restrained whenever a vehicle is in operation. The Maryland Highway Safety Office, located at the State Highway Administration, is the coordinating agency for the Maryland Occupant Protection Task Force, which looks at the issues of both adult and child passenger safety. Together, they publicize Maryland's primary-enforcement seat-belt law. This proactive legislation, its strong enforcement Statewide, and a Statewide educational campaign, have elevated Maryland's seat belt use rate to 85 percent, one of the highest in the nation.

Our highway safety officials continually examine innovations that have the potential to improve vehicle safety. And, we certainly can appreciate and support any device that encourages each occupant to engage his or her seat belt. Considering our climate, however, we do have some concern as to the safety impacts of your invention, which does not allow the use of the defrost/heating systems unless the seat belts are actively engaged. Automobile manufacturers should address this issue to ensure that this feature will not create a vehicle operations problem, particularly during inclement weather, such as snowy or icy conditions.

On behalf of Governor Glendening and the millions of Maryland motorists, please accept our gratitude for your obvious support and innovative thinking about highway safety and seat belt usage. Through the efforts of individuals such as you, we can all help save lives and improve roadway safety.

My telephone number is 410-865-1000

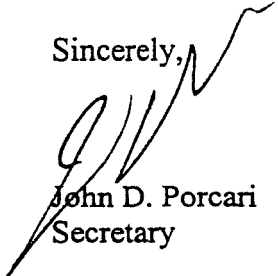
Toll Free Number 1-888-713-1414 TTY For the Deaf: (410) 865-1342

Post Office Box 8755, Baltimore/Washington International Airport, Maryland 21240-0755

Mr. Warren Howard
Page Two

Thank you again for your letter. The Governor appreciates hearing from you, and on his behalf, I also thank you for your interest in this very important issue. If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Tom Hicks, Director of Traffic and Safety for the State Highway Administration at 410-787-5815 or thicks@sha.state.md.us. He will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



John D. Porcari
Secretary

cc: Mr. Tom Hicks, Director of Traffic and Safety, State Highway Administration
Mr. Parker F. Williams, Administrator, State Highway Administration

TONY KNOWLES
GOVERNOR
governor@gov.state.ak.us



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
(907) 465-3500
Fax (907) 465-3532
www.gov.state.ak.us

May 23, 2001

Mr. Warren Howard
9340 Hasell Road
Gulfport, MS 39501

Dear Mr. Howard:

Thank you for your interesting letter. I appreciate you taking the time to share your ideas on how to increase seatbelt safety. I have shared your ideas with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Alaska Science and Technology Foundation, and strongly encourage you to work with them on developing your idea.

Thank you for writing. Good luck with your invention!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Knowles".

Tony Knowles
Governor